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Caucasia RH1

[For anthropometry of Jews in Caucasia see 1: Field, MA1 Iran, category 116, pp. 316-330.]

Georgia RI1
Khevsur, Pshav, Tushin

C. G. [713] Some had the sign of the cross upon their shields, so that they looked exactly like medieval European knights and Crusaders.

C. G. 764 171 Up in the country of the Khevsurs a few very ancient churches can be found; near these, often isolated, stand some typically Khevsurian tomb structures or burial chapels unique in the Caucasus. Funeral ceremonies held by the Khevsurs are (or were ?) often accompanied by horse races, an ancient custom of horse-breeding nomads of the steppes. (This custom is reminiscent of the "dokhia" [δόχια] of some Turkic tribes in the plains near the Altai, described by the Byzantine envoy Menandros Protector, who was sent in 568 to the Great-Khan of the Türküt in the Altai region, a territory which is now part of northwestern Mongolia.) Perhaps the Khevsurs borrowed this custom from the Alans, the nomadic ancestors of the present-day Oset'i.

S'vanet'ians

C. G. 162 101 Another K'art'velian group which in its mountainous seclusion has preserved numerous ancient customs and traditions is the Svans (or Shvan, Strabon's Soanes [Σοάνες]), who live in the high valleys of the Ingur and Ts'khenis-Tskhali, just south of the central high massifs of the Caucasus, between Gvandra and Shkhara. Their language is the most archaic of all the K'art'velian tongues. The Svans are

C. G. [141] outstanding for their height; two meters is not rare.

§ 2. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The so-called "Caucasoid Race" in reference to the "Europeans" is a complete misnomer. A *common* European race has never existed; nor have the "Europeans" come from the Caucasus or immediate vicinity, so that the use of the term is quite unjustifiable.

We are interested, however, not in these pseudo-Caucasians but in the true Caucasians, the natives of Caucasia who speak languages belonging to no linguistic group outside of the Caucasus. Do *they* (or at least some of them) form a distinct race?

Negatively stated, the Caucasians are not, as was formerly supposed, survivors of numberless different stocks and races, who, one after the other, found refuge in the Caucasus Mountains. The linguistic and cultural complexity of Caucasia has indeed misled the earlier anthropologists to such untenable conjectures, but today we know that this assumption is false, and after having made sufficient reservations, we may even speak of a "Caucasian Race". But still much research is necessary before a final word can be said regarding the racial affinity and components of the individual tribes of the Caucasus.

According to Djavachišvili, the typical representatives of the "Caucasian Race" are the Georgians, Lesghians, Cherkess and Armenians. He assigns the following marks as being characteristic of the Caucasian Race: 47% to 67% have dark hair; 53% to 81% dark eyes; 58% to 72% brunette type; head-length moderate, 181 mm. to 187 mm.; head-breadth large, 155 mm. to 159 mm.; 80% to 96% are definitely roundheaded with an 83.44 to 86.55 index; the height of the skull varies from 128 mm. to 133 mm., and in relation to its width 82.58 to 84.89, in relation to its length 69.66 to 73.05. The face is of moderate height, breadth 143 mm. to 145 mm., length 178 mm. to 184 mm. with an index of 79.44 to 81.73 (36% to 54% being broad faced and 46% to 62% moderately so). The distance between inner eye-corners varies from 30 mm. to 32 mm. Differences are especially noticeable in stature, quantity of hair, and nasal index, depending on the ethnic group to which the subject belongs. Djavachišvili, in his excellent compilation of anthropometric data of the Caucasians, divides the race into five main groups and 14 types. The mean stature of the Georgian and Cherkess groups is 165 cm., except for the Kabardians, who are 2 cm. taller. The mean stature of the Lesghian group varies from 164 cm. to 168 cm., varying according to tribe. (The mean stature of the Chechens is 168 cm.[4]) The Georgian group shows the scantiest hair; contrariwise the Armenian group has a very thick growth of hair. The nasal index varies too: Georgian group 58.0; Armenian group 62.5; Cherkess group 64.05; Lesghian group 65.2. The nasal length of the Lesghians is 54; of the Cherkess 57; of the Georgian 60; of the Armenian group 61. The nose is leptorrhine according to the following percentage: 100% of the Gurians and Imeréti; 97% of the

[4] Carleton S. Coon, *The Races of Europe* (1945), p. 633.

141 Karthlians and Kakhetians; 91% of the Abkhaz; 79% of the Cherkess; 71%
142 of the Lesghians; 78% of the Armenians; 70% of the Ingushi.[5] The Caucasians are generally dark-mixed in pigmentation.[6]

TABLE 1

144 **Groups and Types of the Caucasian Race according to Djavachišvili**

Groups	Types	Peoples and Tribes
Cherkess	Western Type Eastern Type Mixed	Abkhaz, Abasians, Abadzekhs Adighé, Kabardians Karachai*
Lesghian	Western Type Eastern Type	Avars, Archi, Kaitago-Tabassaranians** Kurins, Dargwa
Georgian	Western Type Eastern Type Central Type	Gurians, Imeréti, Samegrelo Karthlians, Kakhetians Racha, Mthiuleti
Armenian	Armenian Type Aissorian	Armenians Aissores***
Metamorphic	Georgian-Armenian Lesghian Lesghian-Armenian Georgian-Cherkess	Georgian Jews, Udins Kumyks, Lesghian Tartars Lesghian and Shemakhic Jews Chechens and Ossetes

* The Karachai and the Balkars are Turks. The Mountain Tartars may well be descendents of the Khazars or Volga-Bulgars. R. Bleichsteiner, "Die Völker des Kaukasus," *Asien-Berichte*, V (1944), No. 22, p. 8. Marr considered the Balkars and Karachai as turkized Caucasians, or, as he called them, "Japhetido-Turks".

** Racially the Karakaitags may be turkized Mongols. R. Bleichsteiner, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

*** Aissores are Semites.

This table is based on Djawachischwili, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

141 Practically all Caucasians are brachycephalic or sub-brachycephalic. According to Danilov's measurements, of 873 individuals belonging to 15 different tribes, only 11% were dolichocephals, 16% mesocephals and 73% brachycephals.[7] The following table, based on the most reliable and recent data, shows the indices of the Caucasians and neighbouring non-Caucasians.

[5] A. Djawachischwili, "Die Rassenzusammensetzung der Kaukasusvölker," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, New Series, XX (1925), pp. 79—88.

[6] C. S. Coon, *l. c.*

[7] Cited by Henry Field, *Contribution to the Anthropology of Iran*, p. 107.

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TABLE 2

Cephalic Indices of the Peoples of Caucasia *

A. True Caucasians

PEOPLES		TRIBES	CEPHALIC INDEX	NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	OBSERVER OR SOURCE
Northwesterners	Abkhaz	Abazians	80.7		Chantre
		Coastal Abkhaz	83.0		Chantre
	Cherkess	Mokokh	78.5		Chantre
		Adighé	81.4		Deniker
		Adighé	81.9	30	Erckert
		General	82.05	54	Kappers
		Shapsugs	82.1		Chantre
		Beslenians	82.2		Chantre
		Temirgoi	83.0		Chantre
		General	83.44	238**	Djavachišvili
		General	84.2	85	Erckert
Northeasterners	Chechens	Ingushi	80.4		Chantre
		General	84.0		Coon
		General	84.2	85	Erckert
		General	84.8	34	Kherumian
	Lesghians	Dido	82.6	52	Erckert
		Khinalugs	82.7	10	Erckert
		Budukh	83.3	10	Erckert
		Tsakhurians	84.4	7	Erckert
		Avars	85.1	44	Kherumian
		Dzhek	85.1	10	Erckert
		Laks	85.2	35	Erckert
		General	85.5	521	Erckert
		Avars	85.7	66	Erckert
		Rutulians	85.9	20	Erckert
		Andi	86.0	10	Erckert
		General	86.01	804	Djavachišvili
		Laks	86.1	13	Kherumian
		Aghulians	86.2	14	Erckert
		Dargwa	86.2	129	Erckert
		Tabassaranians	86.3	54	Erckert
		Avars	86.4		Chantre
		Archi	86.4	22	Erckert
		General	86—87		Coon
		Kurins	87.6	43	Erckert
Southerners	Georgians	Gurians	80.5		Chantre
		Khevsurs	80.7		Chantre
		Imeréti	80.9		Chantre
		Mingrelians	83.2	900	Džahov
		Grusians	83.5	21	Erckert
		General	83.7	1245	Djavachišvili
		Svans	83.8		Deniker
		General	84.0		Coon
		Laz	85.6		Deniker
		Grusians	85.8		Chantre
		Laz	86.8		Deniker
		Laz	87.3		Chantre

* In compiling the data on the cephalic indices I have used: Henry Field, *Contributions to the Anthropology of the Soviet Union*, (1948), pp. 130 ff. R. Kherumian, "Contribution à l'anthropologie du Caucase," *L'Anthropologie*, LVII (1948), No. 1—2, p. 62. C. S. Coon, *op. cit.*, pp. 632 ff. A. Baschmakoff, *Cinquante siècles d'évolution ethnique autour de la Mer Noire*, (1937), pp. 29 ff. A Djawachischwili, *op. cit.*, p. 84. R. Erckert, *Der Kaukasus und seine Völker*, pp. 366 f, 370 f.

** This number includes the Abkhaz also.

B. Non-Caucasians Living in the Caucasus

	PEOPLES	TRIBES	CEPHALIC INDEX	NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	OBSERVER OR SOURCE
Indo-Europeans	Persians		76.8		Chantre
	Kurds		77.6		Ivanovskij
	Kurds		77.92	391	Djavachišvili
	Persians		78.4		Deniker
	Kurds		78.5		Deniker
	Persians		78.73	224	Djavachišvili
	Tats		79.0		Deniker
	Tats		79.2	129	Deniker
	Ossetes	Terek	80.7		Chantre
		General	81.4	16	Erckert
		General	81.5	300	Riskine
		General	81.9	554	Deniker
		General	82.0		Coon
		General	82.62	200	Gil'čenko
		General	82.7		Deniker
		Terek & Koban	83.11	10	Chantre
		Northern	84.60	105	Field
		Koban necropolis	84.7		Chantre
	Armenians		85.1		Chantre
			85.6		Deniker
			85.6	21	Erckert
Turko-Tartars	Azerbaijanis		77.7	357	Djavachišvili
	Azerbaijanis		78.1		Deniker
	Turkomans	N. Caucasus	79.3	302	Jarcho
	Azerbaijanis		79.4		Erckert
	Azerbaijanis	Gokcha	81.6		Chantre
	Kumyks		83.5	19	Kherumian
	Taulu		83.6		Deniker
	Nogai	Eastern Kara-Nogai	84.0	156	Terebinskaja
	Nogai	Terek	84.2	108	Levin
	Kumyks		84.7	24	Erckert
	Kumyks		84—85		Chantre
	Nogai		85.0		Chantre
	Karachai		85.1	211	Levin
	Nogai		85.8		Deniker
	Nogai		86.0		Chantre
	Nogai		86.2		Erckert

A closer study of the tables will reveal the following facts.

(1) The pure or relatively pure Iranians have the lowest cephalic index: Persians 76.8, Kurds 77.6, Tats 79.2.

(2) The Lesghians and some Georgians have the highest index.

(3) Low brachycephaly is found among the Mingrelians, Imeréti, Khevsurs, Gurians, Ingushi, some Ossetes and some Abkhaz.

(4) The indices of the individual Ossete tribes vary from 80.7 to a mean 84.7; the Cherkess vary from 78.5 to 84.5.[8]

[8] A. Baschmakoff, *op. cit.*, p. 32 f.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHI Caucasia RHI

A brief explanation for each one of these facts may be in place here. (1) That our table should show the lowest cephalic indices for the Indo-European populations of the Caucasus is to be expected, for the pure Indo-European stock was dolichocephalic. The Scythians, Alans and early Ossetes till the ninth century A. D. were undoubtedly dolichocephals.[9] (2) That the highest brachycephalism should be shared by the Georgians and Lesghians offers no serious problem, for it is certain from other anthropometric data, that at least the Georgians and practically all Lesghians form an anthropological unit. (3) To explain the near-mesocephaly and the (4) variability of certain ethnic groups in the Caucasus is still a difficult unsolved problem. About 50% of the population of the Caucasus is brachycephalic and only 18% dolichocephalic, while the neighbouring South (ancient Asia Minor especially) is overwhelmingly brachycephalic too. It is quite probable that the mesocephalic tendency of the Mingrelians (81.4), Imeréti (80.9 and 81.4), Khevsurs (80.7), Chechens (80.4), Adyghé (81.4) and Abasians (80.7) can be explained to a large extent[10] by a struggle between two unequal forces, dolichocephalic waves from the North and brachycephalic waves from the South. The variability of the indices of the Cherkess tribes (78.5, 82.1, 83, 83.6, 83.8, 84.5) may perhaps be due to the fact that some groups have been subject to the dolichocephalizing waves to a lesser degree than others. The main dolichocephalic waves seem to be especially, though not exclusively, of Aryan origin. Contact with the Indo-Europeans from the earliest times cannot be denied. The Caucasus may very well have been a corridor between Europe and Asia Minor for the Aryan migrations. R. Forrer (*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, LXXVI, p. 247) is of the opinion that the Aryans, coming from the North, passed through the Caucasus as early as the first half of the third millenium B. C. Kretschmer (*Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, LV, p. 97) and B. Hrozný (*Archiv Orientální*, III, p. 294) similarly maintain that the Indo-Europeans used the Caucasus as their route to the Near East, however, somewhat later than Forrer's conjecture, about 2,000 B. C. Other well-known scholars of the Indo-European question, e. g., H. Frankfort (*Studies in Early Pottery of the Near East*, I, p. 158), E. Meyer (*Sitzungsberichte der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1925, p. 249), F. Schachermeyr (*Wanderungen und Ausbreitung der Indo-Germanen im Mittelmeergebiet*, Hirt-Festschrift, Heidelberg, 1936, I, pp. 235, 239)[11] believe that the Caucasus was undoubtedly used during the Indo-European migrations. Hybridization between the brachycephalic Caucasians and the dolichocephals must have begun quite early, as some of the prehistorical graves discovered in central Caucasus containing male dolichocephalic skulls and female

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[9] C. S. Coon, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

[10] We wish to emphasize the words "to large extent." By no means do we wish to explain the complicated problem entirely by one factor alone. There was, for example, contact with the Turco-Mongols, *north* of the Caucasus, who were *brachycephalic*. Traces of this contact are noticeable especially in the Cherkess. Cf. R. Bleichsteiner, "Die Völker des Kaukasus," *Asien-Berichte*, V (1944), Heft 22, pp. 4 f. For example, there are also the Cro-Magnon race and the East Mediterranean dolicocephals who must be considered. Cf. R. Bleichsteiner, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[11] Cf. F. Hančar, *Urgeschichte Kaukasiens*, pp. 355 f., who cites the above-mentioned authoris.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

brachycephalic remains testify. In other words, from these finds it is evident that crossing was not uncommon already during the Bronze Age.[12] Very important racially was the contact with the Cimmerians and Scythian-Sarmatian populations, who for centuries lived in the Caucasus, till in the fourth century B. C. they were driven southward to Subartu.[13] Some present-day Ossetine-speaking tribes are not of Indo-European origin while practically all have a strong non-Indo-European strain.[14]

According to C. S. Coon, "The Caucasic-speaking peoples as a whole, from an anthropometric standpoint, represent a blend between a local Alpine racial nucleus and several kinds of Mediterraneans. The Georgians and the Lesghians are the most Alpine, the Cherkesses the least so. The facial dimensions preclude, in most groups, the presence of a long-faced Irano-Afgan element in any quantity; except among the Cherkesses, the head size, with mean lengths in the low 180's, limits the possible Mediterranean elements to the smaller-headed varieties. These are apparently both Danubian and Cappodocian; there is too much true facial Dinaricism for the Danubian to be the only factor, and too much blondism and nasal concavity for the Cappadocian."[15]

§ 3. LINGUISTICS

Perhaps nowhere in the world will one find such an intricate mosaic of languages as in the Caucasus. Today there are about 40 different Caucasian languages, and formerly the number must have been much greater. Strabo (VI. 1—16) speaks of seventy languages along the coast of the Black Sea and 26 in Albania, that is, in Azerbaijan- and Armenian-speaking countries of today. Pliny speaks of 300 different languages at Dioscurias which necessitated 80 interpreters. Abulfeda calls the Caucasus "The Mountain of Tongues" and Thomas Artsruni, the Armenian historian of the tenth century, writes that "72 different nations inhabit the Caucasus."

These languages fall into three sharply distinct groups: the Northwestern, the Northeastern, and the Southern. (See pp. 1—4.)

1. Phonetics

The vowel system of all three groups, but especially of the Northwestern group, is very poorly developed. In Abkhazian there are only two basic vowels *a* and *ə*.[16] The preponderance of consonants over vowels is less marked in the Northeastern languages: the Chechen, Avaro-Andi, and Lak languages have the five *a, e, i, o, u,* vowels, and some languages, for example Kurin and Aghulian, have the equivalent of something between the German umlauts *ä, ö, ü,* and *a, o, u*.[17] The vowel system of the Southern group is the richest of the three.

[12] R. Bleichsteiner, "Kaukasische Völker," *Ebert's Reallexikon*, VI, p. 250.
[13] R. Bleichsteiner, "Die Völker des Kaukasus," *Asien-Berichte*, V (1944), No. 22, p. 4.
[14] A. Baschmakoff, *op. cit.*, p. 32. See his analysis of the racial problem, *op. cit.*, pp. 28—38.
[15] C. S. Coon, *op. cit.*, pp. 631 f.
[16] R. Bleichsteiner, "Die kaukasische Sprachgruppe," *Anthropos*, XXXII (1937), p. 65. Dirr assigns four basic vowels to Abkhazian. *Einführung in das Studium der kaukasischen Sprachen*, p. 29.